changing historical contexts and over different issues and to specify comprehensively and systematically the set of rules, some permanent and others variable, which govern political conflicts. If we can achieve this, we shall have real knowledge rather than facile speculations about CCP politics.

TANG TSOU

Andrew J. Nathan replies

In the constructive spirit of Professor Tsou's penetrating critique, I should like to underscore three of the problems with which any satisfactory theory of CCP elite politics must deal, and nominate two of the many interesting points in his paper for further investigation.

The first problem is that types of alignments and of conflict within the CCP elite have probably changed over time, rather than remaining consistently factional (or consistently non-factional). As Professor Tsou notes, the history of 20th-century China has been marked by a search for strong leadership, and the CCP has achieved signal successes in establishing political order, reconstructing society and laying the foundations for economic growth. The concept of policy oscillations and political near-paralysis incorporated in my factionalism model seems inadequate as an overall description of CCP behaviour.[1] Yet Professor Tsou believes that the factionalism model is at least partially descriptive of certain periods of CCP politics and feels that some theory of informal groups is needed to take account of the dynamics of elite conflict. He would divide CCP history into several periods, some marked by relatively high levels of elite conflict and others characterized by greater unity.

While more accurate descriptively, this line of argument complicates the requirements of theory. Suppose we knew what types of elite alignments characterized conflict in each period – suppose, for example, that as Professor Tsou argues "alliances" gave way to successively more cohesive forms called "coalitions," "groups" and institutionalized formal structures of authority, with the reverse process occurring when conflicts sharpened. Then what causes this transition from one type of conflict group to another? An elegant theory of political conflict groups would account for the transition from one type of group to another as well as for the conflict behaviour of groups of a given type. Lacking such a theory, we have at the moment a Hobson's choice between assuming the applicability of a single model through time, or asserting without explaining transitions from one model of conflict to another.

The second problem is that the evidence about CCP elite conflict is

[1] A draft essay, "Policy oscillations in the PRC: a critique," contains a brief self-criticism on this point.

ambiguous. Leaving aside the question of periodization, what would be an accurate summary assessment of the level and type of conflict in the CCP elite through its history? Professor Tsou correctly identifies as the central assumption of the factionalism model the statement that "no faction will be able to achieve and maintain overwhelmingly superior power." He argues that, on the contrary, "the basic assumption of CCP politics has been that a group or a coalition of groups can and does decisively defeat a major rival group or coalition." To support his view, he points to such facts as the superior power achieved successively by Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Li Li-san and the returned students group; Mao's decisive defeats of Chang Kuo-t'ao and Wang Ming; and Mao's dominance in the Mao-Liu alliance (pp. 103–104). He notes that each successive ruling group in the CCP has overcome the opposition of other groups in carrying out its policies (pp. 105–106), and that in the CCP's 10 major line struggles a succession of opposition groups was defeated and, often, new groups came to power (p. 112).

I confess to confusion as to how to interpret these pieces of evidence. Do they show that overwhelmingly superior power has been achieved by one faction after another – or that it has not been achieved, and that successive CCP leaders have been repeatedly either toppled or challenged? Do they show that rival groups have been eliminated, or that they have not been eliminated, but that many overthrown groups have persisted and that new rival groups have ceaselessly formed themselves? Even if CCP leaders have operated on the *assumption* that supreme power could be achieved, it seems arguable that successive leaders were forced to stay their hand from consolidating power by their perception of the continued viability of opposition groups. As Professor Tsou says, "a central tendency in the history of the CCP has been an attempt to break away from the politics of factionalism" (p. 103). While he is impressed by the rejection of factionalism implied in repeated attempts to break away from it, I am struck by its persistence, which makes repeated attempts necessary.

The third and most complicated problem is, what is the most accurate and fruitful analytical conception of groups or alignments in CCP politics? In place of the notion of faction, which I defined as a small-scale structure recruited and run along the lines of two-person, clientelist ties, Professor Tsou offers the concept of "informal group" – that is, presumably, a group characterized by its lack of formal organizational structure. When we have said that a group is informal, have we said enough about it to make useful generalizations possible?

"Formal," I take it, means something like "governed by consciously chosen rules." Most groups and organizations have both formal and informal aspects. To take the classic example, formal aspects of bureaucracy include the organization's stated goals and its system of assigned offices; informal aspects include its latent goals (e.g. expansion, self-preservation) and its networks of unassigned interpersonal relation-

ships. In a faction, loyalty and obedience to one's immediate superior in the noded network of clientelist ties is a formal element of group structure, while many aspects of particular relationships among individuals are informal. If this conception is correct, it raises two difficulties for the notion of "informal group." While it is not impossible to imagine a group which has virtually no consciously chosen internal rules of procedure, such groups are not likely to last long before they either dissolve, or design or evolve a few conscious rules for further operation. In dealing with what must be a tiny population of informal groups, then, we would probably be missing many of the important groups in the CCP elite. Indeed, one notes that Professor Tsou's "alliances," "coalitions" and "informal groups" involve agreements among various leaders about superordination and subordination (p. 108). Apparently these groups already include some formal aspects. One cannot resist wondering, then, how they are structured – both formally *and* informally. What motivates people to join? How firm is their commitment? What are the channels of communication and co-ordination? The concept of faction proposes answers to these questions. If it is inadequate to describe the types of groups CCP leaders actually belong to, we will need a conception which deals with the same analytic issues.

In the context of the formal-informal distinction Professor Tsou has raised two very stimulating points which I believe can be followed up even if the notion of informal group is rejected. The first concerns the relationship between changes in the level of elite dissensus and changes in the degree of formality of decision-making procedures. Professor Tsou suggests that periods of dissensus are characterized by greater recourse to informal procedures than periods of consensus. Yet, this may not necessarily be so. Just because procedures are formal does not mean that they are more usual, efficient, consensual, institutionalized, predictable or authoritative than informal ones. Informal consultations within an inner circle may be the smoothest, most valued, most effective and most usual decision-making procedure available to an elite, while recourse to a formal procedure (e.g. voting in the Central Committee) may be unusual, inefficient, unpredictable, unvalued by participants and non-authoritative. Under certain circumstances, promulgation of, or increased reliance on, formal decision-making procedures may be early signs of a trend towards factionalism. It is useful, then, to keep the question of shifts between formal and informal decision-making procedures in the political arena distinct from that of the structure of political groups, so that we can further investigate the relationships between the two.

Professor Tsou's comments on the relations between informal groups, or factions, and the bureaucracies they seek to control are also very stimulating. He observes that when a faction's power base consists of one or more bureaucracies, its political interests are powerfully

influenced by the organizational interests of those bureaucracies. The faction, then, becomes somewhat committed to the specialized goals, ideologies and procedures of the bureaucracy, and loses much of the ideological and policy flexibility of the "pure type" faction. Because of this there is an important difference between a factional system perched at the top of a complex, powerful structure of bureaucracies and one within an arena lacking such structures. I would add, however, that a faction located within or controlling a bureaucracy is just as much affected by the bureaucracy's informal, latent goals and structures, as by its formal, stated goals and structures; and likewise, a faction's operations within a bureaucracy include both formal and informal aspects. This interesting relationship should therefore be investigated without assuming that only formal aspects of bureaucracies and informal aspects of factions come into play.

2. The Indo-Chinese Border Crisis of 1962

Reply by Allen S. Whiting and Kuang-sheng Liao

Professor Friedman's comment [1] in issue number 63 of this journal of our study, "Chinese press perceptions of threat: the U.S. and India, 1962," [2] regrettably reached us without our being given the opportunity to reply in the same issue. Even more regrettably it refers to a publication now three years past. Therefore a detailed discussion of his many points, some of which are well taken, seems unnecessary at this late date and we wish only to address his main lines of argument.

The critique begins and ends by assailing a straw man. Professor Friedman ignores the four specific questions posed at the outset of the article [3] and chooses instead to focus attention on a single paragraph, which he distorts by quotation out of context, as representing the purpose of our research. He devotes much space to Indian views, particularly those of Prime Minister Nehru, to disprove our "original insistence" that, "A proper monitoring of *Jen-min jih-pao* [supposedly] 'would have cautioned Indian leaders against assuming that

1. Edward Friedman, "Some political constraints on a political science: quantitative content analysis and the Indo-Chinese border crisis of 1962," *The China Quarterly*, No. 63 (1975), pp. 528–38.

2. *Ibid.* No. 53 (1973), pp. 80–97.

3. "What clues are provided by the Chinese press as to the perceptions which led to the Chinese offensive? What can be inferred from the patterns of press content and changes therein concerning estimates of Indian intentions or efforts to influence those intentions by political and military means? Do links exist in Chinese perceptions, as alleged in Peking, between threats manifested at one point, in this case India, and others on China's periphery? Does quantitative content analysis provide any special insights into these and other questions?" *Ibid.* p. 83.